



Community partner perspectives on the ability of partnerships to advance social change goals

Liezl Alcantara, Service Learning Course Evaluator, Steans Center for Community-based Service Learning, DePaul University [liezl.grace@gmail.com]

Gary Harper, Professor & Director, Health Behavior and Health Education, School of Public Health, University of Michigan [gharper@depaul.edu]

Howard Rosing, Executive Director, Steans Center for Community-based Service Learning, DePaul University [hrosing@depaul.edu]

Keywords: Social change, community-based organizations, semi-structured interviews, community perspectives, community outcomes

Conference track: Community partnerships and outcomes

Format: Research/scholarly paper

Summary

Within recent years, researchers have turned their attention to assessing community impact of community-university partnerships. The sustainability of successful partnerships hinges upon evaluating partnership outcomes and integrating community feedback into practice. The framework designed by Marullo et al. (2003) was applied in the current project, which entails capturing community partner perspectives on the ability of university-community partnerships to advance social change goals. The authors described four types of goals associated with social change initiatives:

1. To enhance the capacity of individuals or organizations
2. To increase the efficiency of an organization's operations
3. To empower constituents to become more effective agents of change on their own behalf

4. To alter policies or structural arrangements to benefit the disadvantaged. (Marullo et al., 2003, p. 62)

Through this research, we intend to learn about the experiences of representatives from community-based organizations (CBOs) involved in partnerships with DePaul University's Steans Center for Community-based Service Learning and Egan Urban Center. Research questions pinpoint what specifically, if at all, partnerships add or detract from CBO organizational functioning.

At the onset of the interview, basic demographic information relevant to understanding the institutional partnership, such as length of relationship with the university, was collected. Data were collected using a semi-structured interview guide. Interview questions addressed how participation has influenced the CBO and what CBO representatives perceive is an ideal partnership between the CBO and collaborating universities.

An inductive analysis procedure was utilized to allow patterns, themes, and categories of analysis to emerge from the transcribed interview data. The results yield information regarding the influence of universities on CBOs as well as characteristics of the ideal community-university partnership from the perspective of community partners.

References

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